

A Casket of Thoughts

By
Viviane Verne



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Poems by Viviane Verne

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FRAGMENTS

THOUGHTS

Thoughts are like butterflies that we sometimes pinion

Down to white pages, where we may dissect
The mystery of life, and of Fate's dominion,
The reason of a "cause" and its "effect."

Yet, when we capture all the "species" fleeting

Vaguely thro' regions where we cannot soar,
Their blind ineptitude still leaves us beating
Our hearts against blind mystery as before.

So wisdom comes to those, who realizing then

It is not well to know what God would hide,
Courage and faith, is all He asks of men—
There is no mystery on the "Other Side."

AVIATION

Earth!—that came to man's possession,
Man has burrowed in your breast,
Lifted up the sea's adhesion
From the secrets you invest.

Torn with scientific fingers
Every shred of virgin guise,
Until now there only lingers
Faint pure patches in your skies.

This the "halo" that you treasure,
Where, immunely, you could smile
Is at last man's wanton pleasure
That he reaches to defile.

This your last inviolation,
Almost conquered by his might,
"Will it bring you reparation
Or bestow eternal blight?"

In the treasures he had wrested
From reluctance of your store :
Man has callously attested
Only lust, to gather more.

All the secrets you have yielded,
From a proud tenacity,
Are but links that he has wielded
Into chains of slavery.

Now he broaches your last power
That the ages have withstood,
Christening it, a "Bloody dower"
In a Cain-like brotherhood.

Yet 'tis not quite devastated ;
There is time to think and pause ;
"Will your halo isolated,
Quell the warring of the wars ?"

Will this remnant of virginity
Impregnate an unknown Dawn,
Giving back despoil'd pristinity
To the jewels you have worn ?
.

Out of blood, and rape, and terror
That his lust wrought to befall,
Man may learn—betimes—his error,
Love—not force—wins you for all.

You whom God had made maternal
—Filling you with plenitude—
Man has tried to make infernal
By a blind ineptitude.

Now that he can kiss your forehead
Lust may pass and love fulfil
All the promise that Christ's law said
Peace to men—on Earth Goodwill.

A RECIPE

Would you know the art of contentment,
The joy of molestless calm
—Resignation without resentment,
To Life's attendant alarm ?

Would you learn the ease of forgetting
What hurt you long ago,
And lose the pain of regretting
A vanished fire's glow ?

Would you like to have the secret
Of growing old with grace,
Of bearing bravely defeat, yet
Retaining unruffled face ?

Find in the present moment
The value of past mistakes,
And in resignation, consolement
For the cherished joy which forsakes.

Seek antidotal ingredients
In pleasures approximate,
“The heart has many expedients
For reaching the ultimate.”

And life has roses all the way,
Red and white, and early and late,
If we but pluck them day by day
In colours and moods appropriate.

The sun, that the dawn has painted
In beauty's exultitude,
Revives his colours unfainted
In the day's penultitude.

The present is all we can ensure
To the measure of our tread,
Yesterday's glory is no more,
To-morrow's may be dead.

If you bury the past without regret
You parry the future's thrust,
And find your soul in a frame reset
With patience, and faith, and trust.

You will find the spark of survival
In the ashes that seemed to die,
That, like the sun's revival,
Enhances your evening sky.

This is the art of contentment,
To find the good in all :
Resignation without resentment
To a Higher Power's Thrall.

THE PRIZE

Joy cannot come to us really, if striving for self alone,
The heights of aloof ambition move in a very cold zone,
The results of greatest endeavour become but a weary
chain

Without the completing link of love—Life's superlative
gain.

TREES IN JUNE

They stand so still and stately in the June sunshine,
Their dark stems showing like tracery thro' green lace,
And each leaf quivering like a living nerve

“As they lift in the breeze and swerve”

With gentle passion towards each other.

The sun makes them passionate, and their youth lends
grace

To every abandon, in the June sunshine,

As they curtsy in swaying line,

Vying for the Sun's embrace—

Like girls who jealously would rival one another.

How young they are. New-born from an old decline,

Preening themselves upon resuscitated verve

With arrant unreserve.

How young they are ; how full of vigorous sap,
Each shape of curve and colour perfect—as they turn
In languorous loveliness upward to the sun,

Then droop as gently down beneath his warm
caress,

Whispering to each other of what they all have done.

—“It is so sweet in youth to tell of love's caress

And youth must seize it swiftly, or 'tis lost
mayhap.”

Just a while ago I saw these young things peep,
They were so tiny and shy—so frightened of the
world,

So reluctant to be uncurl'd

From the security of timid swaddling sleep.

They were afraid of life—not knowing the reason why—
And their lover veiled his passion as they vaguely moved
From tardy winter's good-bye.

Then he spread his arms and claimed them out of the
red June sky !!!

Now they fear no more,
For they know that to live is to love, and be loved
(While sunbeams pour),
And when love is dead—to die.

They are superbly insolent in their languoring
For their desireful lover's smile, and summer kiss.

Love gives confidence that nothing else can bring,
And these young things are thrilling with its luscious
bliss,

As they intertwine
In the June sunshine.

This is the reason they live and the reason they die
For the tender green will be withered, and old, and
decline

At the end of July.

But the strong black stems will stand there still, thro'
winter storm and stress,
Waiting to give again to the Sun the leaves he loves to
caress.

DIVORCED !!

When you had passed to-day, it seemed so strange
That we should pass as strangers, showing no regret,
For pride had promised love oblivion without change—
“ To-night ”—Ah Me !—I can't remember to forget.

MY LUCKY STAR

My feet on the threshold of fortune,
My heart in the grip of love ;
God give me the moment opportune
To make the fateful move
That steers my barque to the port of hope
And the shimmering shores of desire,
Where my fettered soul can find a scope
For its purest, brightest fire.

The wind flies over a jewelled dome,
And the good ship throbs and churns
The sleepy waves to a curling foam,
And beautiful Venus burns.
Out of the diamonded velvet of night
She throws inspiring beams
On sea and ship, like the dawning light
Of almost accomplished dreams.

The white froth swirls in a track outlined,
That dies in its ocean bed,
Like the marks of fate I have left behind,
Churned and broken and dead.
Nothing was worth a lasting touch,
And so, in Destiny's wake,
My futile ripples were only such
As lived a moment to break.

But here on the pulsing ship to-night
I gaze through the luminous air,

And feel that God, in His starry height,
Has heard and answered my prayer.
For a smile is wreathed in the clouds above,
And the breeze seems to say there are
Fortune, and peace, and tested love
In the beams of my Lucky Star.

.

My feet on the threshold of fortune
And love at the door with me,
God give us the moment opportune
To find the key.

THE CHRYSALIS

Cocooned in the strands of volition, I swing
Resistless in the winds of destiny
On the tiny leaf apportioned me,
Not knowing what I am, nor where I be,
Until Light gives me eyes and I can see,
Until my dormant voice awakes, and I can sing
In the long summer of Eternity.

THE DREAM

I fell asleep upon a sultry night
When storm and lightning burnt and burst the skies,
And all the spirits of the universe took flight—
 My soul flew out with them into the night,
 When sleep had sealed my eyes.

A flashing moment bore me ages gone
Adown Time's vista to a far-back time.
 I stood within a pillared silence all alone,
 Alone with treacherous sin—and honour gone
 Praying in anguish that I might atone—
 . . . And then her voice fell on me like a chime.

“Forgive ; but give me, too,
One glance of mercy. ’Tis for you
I have committed sin. My judge and my
 accomplice.

“It is not mine to struggle. Fate
Tossed you my heart, to spurn and hate ;
Threw this pure passion—that might have foiled
Æons of ineptitude—before Virtue that recoiled
In horror of my frowardness. Till I but learned to
 pray
For one cold kiss—*you turn your face away—*
Ah ! you remember *once*, in cerements of bliss
You held me close, and gave me more than this.

You joyed with me—*the woman and the celibate*—
Tasting a rapture, that the gods withheld till late.
You pressed against my burning heart, another fire,
And led me—leading, too—to love's desire :
You kissed my lips, and through their gushing sighs
Sighed back a passion that had no disguise.

“ Ah ! you remember *that*, and why I plead
For mercy. My accomplice and my judge
Here, where my aching love can no more feed
Upon the roses of the rapture that you grudge :
Oh ! give me then forgiveness. Some grace—
I cannot live without your love : and now—
I cannot die. Until, thro' all my tears, I trace
Within your eyes some pardon for our broken vow.

“ Oh, Arbutus ! In their glances lie
Nought but scorn's lash, where once gleamed ecstasy,
Scorn on your lips that once pressed Paradise
Into my thirsty soul, thro' fluttering sighs.

“—And now—this same soul whirls
In its last agony, to your callous feet—
. . . (Your proud mouth curls—
Oh, it is mete—it is mete !)
Crushed in ambition, till it but waits to pray
For one cold word—you *turn your face away*—

Oh, Destiny ! Oh, Life ! Oh, Taunting Fate !
You hate because I love. I love because you hate.”

I saw her fall—the fallen vestal maid—
And I—her murderer, as verily as though my hand
 had laid
 The knife upon her heart
 . . . Turned coldly to depart.

The pillared silence rocked—white mist arose,
Music I had not heard before came through the mist—
 I felt my forehead kissed,
 As though in valediction.
And some great longing held me in its throes,
 Flinging my penitence a contradiction.

Dead, and cold, and still, she lay in the silence !!!
The Temple faded ; and then in swift sequence
There came again the sultry night and flashings of the
 storm
Lifting me into billowy clouds, where her white form
Floated and beckoned—the while I followed on,
Knowing at last a truth that came to me too late—
 “ *I loved her too*—though she alone had gone—
From my blind cowardice—*our* sin to expiate—
 . . . And then I groaned and woke in Modern Babylon.

’Twas but a dream ; yet perchance such are sent
To light us sometimes in our wonderment
 At Life’s cold bitterness and punishment,

To teach us that an hour of cowardice
Demands an age of reparation as its price—
That virtue chooses death, in preference to vice.

.

I do not know ; but somewhere she may wait,
That vestal Priestess for her Pagan Priest,
Who lived, and lives again, perhaps, to exculpate
His soul from tarnish of that stolen feast ;
Who, sinning, yet strove feebly to avoid,
With human denseness, his avoidless share,
Not knowing that the “ Super-Scheme ” keeps un-
destroy’d
Material errors that are “ bonded ” for repair.

.

I do not know—but if a soul reincarnates
She, who atoned, may stoop from her exemption,
And taking on the lowliness that exaltates
Lift her lost lover to a last redemption,
Winning for both Supernal unity,
For Love is love, thro’ all Eternity.

THE OCCULT

A force that is outside material intervention,
Yet contributing intangible co-operation,
Implacable—but with benign attention
Listening to Earth's perplexed interrogation ;
 Cruelly kind, calmly intolerant of blind sorrow,
 Barring inexorably our random way,
 Knowing so well that the thorns of to-day
 Will blossom with roses to-morrow.

ALONE (*A War incident*)

I am sitting alone by a lonely fire
In lonely London—Oh Me! Oh My!
How lonely it is—Oh Me! Oh My!
I've nothing to do but watch coals expire,
And the War makes coal so dear to buy.
I wonder how many there are like me,
 Sitting alone by a lonely fire?
When the fire goes out how lonely I'll be—
 Oh My! Oh Me!

There's a clock that ticks on the mantelpiece,
A black-painted shelf—Oh Me! Oh My!
With a woollen fringe—Oh Me! Oh My!
There's a tablecloth all covered with grease,
And a china dog with a broken eye,
And an "easy" chair that gives no ease—
 I wonder how long I'll be able to bear it,
The dog, and the table, and mantelpiece,
And an ache in my heart that will not cease?
 Perhaps I could manage with someone to share it—
 Oh Me! Oh My!

There's flowered linoleum on the floor,
And a skin hearth-rug—Oh Me! Oh My!
With the fur worn off—Oh Me! Oh My!
There's a broken bookcase, empty of lore,
And some waxen flowers that will not die—
 I wonder how many there are like me

Sitting behind a friendless door,
Vampired slowly by misery,
Failure behind and failure before ?

When the fire goes out—how cold I'll be—
Oh My ! Oh Me !

There is dull green paper on the walls,
And battered pictures—Oh Me ! Oh My !
How ugly it is—Oh Me ! Oh My !—
No one will call till the landlady calls,
And of course she will only come to pry—
Well—I haven't the rent to give her to-night

For even these ugly walls ;
O God ! don't make it worth while to fight,
It cannot be harder to die ;

One *must* find rest when the last sleep falls,
When the fire goes out, perhaps I'll try—
Oh Me ! Oh My !

WRITTEN IN A CHILD'S ALBUM

At night, when the stars are beaming
In the path of the sleeping sun,
They seem like God's eyes gleaming
To see what the world has done.

And if the sun glows at morning
And the sky is pink and bright,
You'll know He's pleased with the dawning
Of a day that will be all right.

But if the rain comes sweeping
From clouds that are heavy and sad,
Then I think that God is weeping
For somebody who is bad.

So whenever the day is tearful
And clouds lean down and brood ;
If you're bright and kind and cheerful
It may help someone else to be good.

A PORTRAIT

Calm forehead, faint lined by introspective thought,
Under the rippling brown of smoothly hair
That matches well brown eyes, whose loveliness is
 fraught

Heavily with a power to do and dare,
 Blended with reminiscent care.

Even dark brows that sweep from a handsome nose,
Royally fine and haughtily dominant ;
 The type where racial greatness shows.

Near to this, because of its sweet brevity
In alluring delicacy, there is the upper lip
Curbing in strong silence all the temerity—
Here betrayed in unrequited worship
Of a soul's ambition—in brave austerity,
Leashing, 'neath the lower lip, the heart's authority.

Sweet face, sweet mouth, firm chin so proudly high
Over your neck, where strength and beauty vie,
 Naught can withstand you, if you dare but try.

THE MYSTERY

Sweetheart, I never knew before
How much life held of ecstasy
Until your white hand shut Death's door ;
 Oh Love, are you really gone from me ?

I never knew the pitiless rain
That falls on a living heart, bereft
Of everything but a dead love's pain
And the memories that are left ;
 Oh Love, are they *all* that is left ?

The world is dead, for the voice is still
That made my world what it used to be,
And the door of death is so cold and chill ;
Oh Love, can your beautiful soul break free
 And come again thro' the door to me ?

THE TURNSTILE

Joy knocks upon your door but once. Can you hear ?
Love blossoms once within your garden. Is it dear ?
Hope smiles her courage where two misty roads unite,
—Ah, they are blessed—who read the signs aright.

FRIENDSHIP

When first I met you—friend of years ago,
Life stretched before me full of flowers fair ;
I thought to pluck the sweetest, and revel in their glow
While carelessly I passed the one most rare.

Music was in your soul, and on your finger-tips ;
Gentleness endowed you like a soft caress ;
Sadness was in your eyes—yet kindness on your lips,
Life's ways had hurt you, but you felt no bitterness.

Friend of my youth and of my later years,
We both have tasted more than sorrow's touch ;
We both have felt the balm of healing tears,
And now we know that souls are built from such.

Friendship will live when smiles and passion wane,
—Blossoming still upon an arid track—
And they who find it in the chill of autumn rain,
Find all that spring could ever give them back.

Think not I do not know this truth at last,
That sympathy and kindness are the fairest flowers ;
And so, from all the garden of my past
Your changeless friendship fills my lonely hours.

THE SPIRIT

Like gold in a hidden mine,
Like grapes of embryo wine,
Like flowers whose modest bloom
Cradle a priceless perfume ;
 Like rampant blaze that refines—
 Or water the “ rod ” divines—
 Love waits for the Master hand.

Like the edelweiss on the mountain
And the diamond under the sea ;
The elusive song of a fountain,
Or the sun’s far majesty ;
 The eagle caught in a fowler’s net,
 Ice-fields in the distant North,
 A lion in tropical home beset,
 Or the whirlpool’s passionate wrath—
 Love is as hard to command.

The soul is a hidden mine
Where the purest gold may shine ;
Thoughts—like unnoticed flowers—
Wither in pristine powers
 Where life’s furnace may calcine
 The heart in its ruby wine—
 Then love is forlorn.

.

In a passionate aspiration,
In a faith that has no flaw,
In a courage without hesitation,
Where sacrifice knows no law.

 In the regions of pure elation
 Under glow of the sun's soul fire,
 Self kneels to self-immolation,
 And rises reclaimed from the pyre—
 So love is born.

JUDGE NOT

Sometimes at night when the world is still, and the
caves of silence yawn,
I seem to glide on an eerie wind, where a thousand
sighs are born,
And ghosts of bodies that never lived, flit past like
clouds astray,
And voices that never wept nor laughed clamour about
my way,
I float through the weird, wild place alone—only the
ghosts and me—
And their eager eyes gleam from the dark, full of
pictures they cannot see,
And the phantom rustle of blotted leaves—stories that
no one wrote,
Sounds like laughter and drip of tears, and hope's
expiring note.
The leaves are turned by unseen hands, and strange
sounds pulse the air—
A burst of laughter, a thrilling song, or the sob of a
mad despair—
And the eerie wind on which I float, seems to whisper
what they mean
The ghosts of laughter, and love, and hopes—of things
that might have been.
Here is a girl in her lover's arms, with the gladness of
life on her face ;
He was false to her in the other world, where a false
friend stole her place,

But the broken heart has hidden a dream through all
years that have gone,
And now, in these misty realms, the girl she was lives
on
Springtime laughter, and youth's red blush, and the
fire of love between ;
Lovers that love in the smile of May, when the trees
are changeless green ;
The sweet ghosts float through the phantom groves, in
the light of a fadeless day ;
But back in the world, a woman broods—lonely and
bitter, old and grey.

And here is a conquering, noble youth, whose deeds
have won him fame,
He has lifted men to a higher place—and they cheer
his honoured name—
But away thro' the night and wind I see, a dreary
prison den
Where a prisoner sits in the shadow of death, cursing
his brother men ;
The glitter of gold, and red of wine, and the smile of
women fair
Sent the man that God had fashioned here, and left
the other there ;
And now in the ghostly garden of deeds, the flowers he
longed for bloom—
While a friendless wretch in a prison cell, sits waiting
the step of doom.

There passes a bent and trembling shape across the
ghostly stage—
There's a stately lady in regal home, whose life has a
secret page ;
Once the tide of despair ran very close—the vultures
of sin were near,
But love's hand drew her away from the brink, and
now—that Shape is here ;
Often at night, in her costly bed of shimmering silk
and lace,
A ragged ghost peers out of the dark, and leers in the
lady's face ;
It gibbers and reeks, with a loathsome air, and sits in
her room till day—
In the morning the lady is very pale, as she drives on
her stately way.

Out from the shadows a miser steals, clutching great
bags of gold—
In the world of men a good man lives, hearing his
deeds extoll'd,
But often his soul, by secret ways, creeps to this world
in stealth,
Where long ago pride took the miser away from his
hoarded wealth.
The great philanthropist goes his way, honoured by
rich and poor,
For the hospital coffers hold his cheques, and beggars
bless his door ;

But the good man knows there's a shrivelled form of
greedy and callous mien,
Counting the ghostly gold of years—the millions that
might have been.

O ! ghosts of bodies that never lived, and smiles that
have never smiled,
Is it well to rush on the “ astral ” wind, when the soul
is free and wild,
To your shadowy world of whispering shapes, where
each ghost makes us see
The beings we are, and may have been, and what we
yet may be ?

THE AFFINITY

Thou ! Is it thou ? Do I find thee ?

Heart of my heart, come nearer,
Dost remember the ages behind thee

Since thy hand lay in mine, but not dearer
Than I find it now ! We have slept

While the cycles moved. Didst thou miss me ?
And we waked but a moment ago. Yet I've kept
The hunger for you. Love, kiss me.

A REGRET

Was it because we did not understand
That love must yield a deeper purpose than delight,
That each should give, and yet make no demand—
That *both* should strive to tune each soul aright ?

Was it because we did not both aspire
To reach the altitude love opens unto all,
Where side by side, two souls may breathe the
 “ Higher ”
And hand in hand float upward to God's call ?

Did you do this, my dear—whose love is dead ?—
Did I ?—whose wounds throbb'd long before they
 healed,
Ah ! Had we known—our tears had been unshed
If we had waited—this may have been revealed.

It was because of this we vaguely groped,
Leaning on love alone, and passion's fire ;
It was because of this we vainly hoped
To reach the acme of our lives' desire.

Love, with passion only, never can attain
The heights sublime its purpose has in view,
Unless there be some knowledge of this higher gain,
Unless *we*, to that loftier link keep true !!!

UNSILENCED (*Lines on the tragic fate of Mary Stuart
and those connected with her sombre destiny*)

Though they sleep so quietly, while Time moves
 Over their moveless graves,
We feel to-day their very hates and love,
 And strive to stem the waves
Of vague conjecture round each silent tongue.

Had they fall'n more softly—none might rise
 To blame or exculpate ;
But time grows ever fuller of surmise
 Around past passions of the Great
Whose throbbless hearts have been traditionally wrung.

.

There are some fires, that, if too quickly quenched,
 Ignite a fiercer flame ;
And so, perchance, some spirits stand entrenched
 Behind the ashes of dead shame
Until the Truth or Lie be known and sung.

IMPERIALITIES

BRITANNIA'S GUARD

O Land of mine, and realms of my begetting
Awake ! for there is treachery at our gate,
Our flag must wave beneath a sun unsetting,
Our seas must aye be ours to dominate.
To us is giv'n the power of suppressing
Whatever wrong our frailer friends lament,
And tho' we crave naught but a Peaceful blessing,
We'll fight to death, to be God's instrument.

From the East and West they come, sturdy, strong,
and brave,
Only waiting for the call that the Mother gave ;
From the blazing Southern Cross—from the
Northern snows,
British sons with ready hearts, rally to her foes.

Oh, Sons of mine !—glorying in my power,
Arise ! for there are cowards in the sea,
And there are vile usurpers in God's bower,
Pouring upon my breast indignity.
Come from the girdle of my wide Empire,
Jewels I set upon the distant seas,
Born of a spirit that shall not expire
Until the conflict of the World shall cease.

From the North and South they come, at the
Mother's call,
Dauntless in their youthful might—fearless who
may fall ;

Foes will shirk and cower back, 'neath their onward
tread,
Britain's Guard is out to-day—Britannia at the
head.

THE ANZAC

Sturdy and straight — unpolished diamond — but
genuine,
Filled with quick ardour that yet is superfine,
He leaves his sports and sunshine to leap at Duty's call
To the side of his glorious Mother, and his place in
the Empire's Hall.

Stern young cub of the Lion, reckless of life and limb,
Knowing that if he fall, others will follow him ;
Full of glad life and vigour, yet grimly smiling at
death,
The Anzac claims his heritage, with his last undaunted
breath.

The Cross above Australia,
As above no other land,
Shines like (in heaven's regalia)
God's smile to the Motherland.

CANADA

They came from their beautiful farms and peaceful
homes,

Regretless in magnificent dignity and power ;
Young English Oaks that history's mightiest tomes
Can never fitly picture in War's mightiest hour.

They rallied round Britannia when she stood assailed
By knavish tricks and hostile jealousy ;
And just because her children never quailed,
She wins ! She triumphs ! over land and sea.

Snows as white as an angel's thought,
Fair British homes on every hand,
England will keep what she has bought
With the blood of sons of Motherland.

SOUTH AFRICA

Britannia won you from uncertain fate,
And now you stand beside her at proud Victory's gate,
Waiting the moment when it opens wide
Before the onrush of a new Imperial tide.

Brave Botha, and stern Smuts ! you had the courage
rare

To say you were mistaken, and then to rise and dare
All that her noblest sons could ever do for her
Who conquers hate by love, and wisdom's mighty spur

The Veldt with its fascination,
And Africa's dulcet charm,
Shall reach their true elevation
In the strength of England's arm.

LONDON (DECEMBER 1914)

Up in the yellow fog a red ball is swinging,
Glowing like some angry god whose right is denied him,
For his beams cannot pierce the fog to the
shivering trees—

Bare trees swishing together and whispering soberly,
Not moaning, but greyly resigned to a sadness
immutable;

Naked and listless above strange tents in their midst,
Strange things that came on the grass of the children's
playground;

Strange men they cover, who substitute grim action
for play,

Stern-coloured forms in dull yellow,
Like the fog that covers the sun.

Out in the streets the cars and buses are rushing;
Very few horses are left because of the war;
Nobody thinks of anything else but the war!!

And the end of the war.

Even the children cannot be happy this Christmas-tide.

Down all the muddy streets the soldiers are marching,
Holding brave heads to the fog-hidden sun;
Marching past friends and familiar buildings—to death
or to victory,

Fearless young cubs of the Lion.

It's cold in the streets, and the people shiver,
But the hearts of the boys in the fog-coloured coats
Are as hot as the angry sun.

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp. The sound is a grim
accompaniment

To the blythe marching song they whistle.

The crowd looks on with restrained approval,
That diffuses a silent enthusiasm, needless of cheers.
There is too much behind the tramp and the song ;
Life is too grim, too stern for mirth just now,
Only the merry whistle which tells of unafraidness,
Floating above the rhythmical tramp like the Spirit
Of some glad future.

Too early for exultation, too late for regret ;
But the civilians know that *their* future is safe
In the grasp of the soldiers who march to victory or
death,

Equally glad to yield unit strength to either ;
For the first is as great as the last to any of these war-
fledglings

Tramping through London's mud that may cling till
they reach the trenches,
And remain the last of Old England's soil that many
will ever possess.

Clerks and paupers and millionaires, marching in level
band,

Smiling and glad and courage-borne, under the fog-
filled sky ;

Pauper and Cræsus are one to-day in their gamble
with life and death,

For death is the ladder to victory, and victory is
freedom for all.

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp. London looks on, immune
from doubt,
For she knows she is safe in the love of the lives—free-
given—

Of her splendid soldier sons.

The red god in the yellow sky recedes still further and
grows faint
Behind black clouds that spit white specks of sleet,
And then environ him completely in their resistless
arms.

The sleet turns into velvet snows that whirl in an
icy blast ;

The bare trees in the parks and gardens shiver and moan,
Whispering forlornly together of the coming night.

The tramp and the merry whistle have passed,
Only the silent crowd is left with its sadness immutable,
Only the silent snow dying in the trampled mud,
And the human tide drifting above its inertness
To places where human prayers in lowliness may follow
The gallant fellows who walk with a jaunty step
To the pyre of self-sacrifice—in the flame of their
country's need ;

Palace and hovel, garret and lonely lodgment,
Hold aching hearts to-night that ache gladly
Because of their loved ones' noble courage.

White hands bejewelled, and toil-worn fingers
press,
With the same Spartan strength, on the same aching
void—

The souls of the women have followed their men to
the war,

It is all they can do.

Dulled lamps flickering in place of the dull red sun,
Long empty streets gleaming still with dead snow ;
And the fog still in the sky while wind-swept clouds
Scurry across great sprays of searchlights that cut the
opaque darkness,

Telling the populace of their rulers' vigilance.

Out of the gloom below the motor buses loom like
clumsy phantoms,

Lurching towards muffled lamps—where people, who
must be abroad,

Step carefully to slippery pavements, and hurry into
the darkness ;

Laughter is seldom and short, but the eyes of the
people are confident,

And panic is quite unfelt, though they know

That the big lights in the sky and the faint street
lamps

Baffle the blustering Zeppelins, and a malice inept,

That would futilely kill.

The halls and the theatres are open because London's
spirit is brave,

But the hearts that mimic and laugh are full of prayers
for the trenches ;

And they who sit smiling and clapping are filling the
social trenches
In stoical self-abnegation
Which finds vent in aloof pursuance
Of Duty, wherever it calls.

There's a party of cultured ladies knitting vests for the
men at the front
In a box on the O.P. side,
And a girl comes before the curtain to sing the soldier's
song,
"It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long, long way to go";
But the ladies who knit in the boxes, and the people
in gallery and stalls,
Know that the soldiers will never give in
Till they reach their final goal.

Shaded lamps at Victoria, and trains full of refugees,
They have come from such horrors in Belgium that
London seems Paradise.
The stately dames of Britain, and their lowly sister
workers,
Meet them with bountiful welcome and the ready
hand of friendship,
That brings effacement of horrors, and gives new
courage and hope;
All grades and distinctions forgotten
In this mighty birth of an "Era,"

Founded on sorrow's substratum,
And welded by war's sacrificial,
All grades and distinctions forgotten among the
 "soldiers" who build,
Worker woman and stately dame, pauper and prince
 and fugitive

 Giving their best in unison
For Britain, whose doors were always ajar to the
 persecuted,

 Wide opens them now to all suffering,
And she and her Allies are fighting for freedom, and
 justice for all.

Silent and still are the streets,
The theatres and restaurants are closed, the people
 all gone ;

Only the tramp of the watchers—official and "special"
 —are heard

On the echoing blocks.

The buses and cabs are silent, and the shrouded lamps
 almost sleeping.

But up in the sky the searchlights keep vigilant watch
 Telling of tireless watchers.

Sleep ! England ! sleep in thy calm impregnability,
Pulsed by thy great heart, London, whose blood will
 flow, if need be, for thy weal.

London, who sits sedate and unalarmed beneath the
 menace of your skies.

England ! be calm. This storm will quail before thy
just ambitions,
This night will pass to dawn beneath the Hand
Of thy unfailing Providence.

THE CHOICE

If, love, I go to death, remember life was given
In this great cause that's champion'd from above ;
If I should stay—your heart would be more riven—
For then I'd be unworthy of your love.

So let me go—embraved—by your brave heart,
War is a god whom even love obeys.
If I'm to die—it is the better part,
For then I know your love is mine always.

KENSINGTON GARDENS (1915)

Dappling shadows on the summer grass,
Vernal rivalry among the trees ;
Lovers smiling coyly as they pass,
Sparrows laughing in the summer breeze.

Children playing by the placid lake,
Coaxing ducks, with greedy eyes ;
Sunlight gilding ripplelets that break
Where they struggle for a prize.

Jealous dogs that " do delight "
In frantic grappling for a stick,
Racing back with " bark and bite,"
To yield a trophy quite historic.

Lonely ladies dreaming in bath-chairs,
Old men taking sun baths on the seats,
Nurses softly talking in prim pairs,
Telling of their soldier lovers' feats.

Medall'd patrols keeping austere guard
Over radiant rose and ever-greens,
Gold-flecked finery and velvet sward,
And the quiet garden of dead queens.

Fleecy clouds in limpid blue,
Smiling down with tender mien ;
Life seems simple, honest, true,
In this simple open scene.

Who would think that vault benign
God's last area free from vice,
Initiates the aerial mine,
With babes below as sacrifice.

Sitting here on summer morn,
With the birds and babes at play,
Who could dream that sky was torn
Yesternight—with hellish spray.

It is strange that Nature's lurement
Waits—unclaimed—for our retrieval,
While men war in false endurance
Deeming this life's great achievement.

DRAKE'S POOL

(The River Carrigaline, about a mile from Cork Harbour, runs into a large pool of mysterious depth and surprisingly expansive as compared with the river itself. Its position is secluded and of surpassing beauty, being heavily wooded on every side ; and local tradition holds that Sir Francis Drake once rested here in peace and security, while preparing for a naval coup de grace. The pool is situated on the Coolmore Estate, the property of Major Newenham—who has kindly contributed details of the legend.)

Here it was that he lurked, biding his hour of triumph,
Resting and getting strength to fight for England and
Bess.

The woods were as quiet then, and the pool as deep
and still,

And the birds were as blythe as to-day, and sang to
him songs of glory,

Glory for Queen and country, although they trembled
in balance.

But Drake knew, while he rested, that he could turn
the scale.

Here in the pool he waited, making plans for Elizabeth,
And out of the pool he glided, down quiet Carrigaline,
To the sapphire waters of Cork, where the Spaniards
had planned in vain

To thwart his elusive dexterity—and the “ Day ” he
was out to win.

Britain was menaced and harassed ; but Drake had his
hand on the helm
Of his full-sailed wooden " Dreadnought " fleet,
And Bess had the helm in London ;
And she had Drake's heart in her talons,
Eagle-faced, stone-hearted Bess—
She knew as she held the state helm,
That Drake with his full-sailed " Dreadnoughts "
Would guide the lumbering gun-boats
To Victory for her and her kingdom.

It is only a vague-told story of hundreds of years ago,
But I seem to see the phantom sea-soldier
Creeping from cover down Carrigaline,
Sure of his triumph and Queen.
England is menaced, her crown is in danger,
But gallant-souled Drake is her saviour.

Only a legendary tale of hundreds of years ago,
And the phantom fleet has gone over the edge of the
sea ;
The gulls are swirling and whirling, with strange
reminiscent cries,
But England is safe, and the Spaniards scattered and
gone.

I stand by the deep still pool at the bend of Carrigaline,
And the long-still, stalwart soul, seems to rise in
Britain's " to-day,"

Where the vision of bellying sails and creaking wooden
 planks
Gives place to floating iron Colossus' and full-bellied
 aerial dragons,
Spitting fire, and poison, and hate unconquering
Down on the street where proud Bess jaunted—
Dominant Bess, who left a brave legacy
Of courage and force to her sex of the present,
Who, perhaps, animated by such subtle influence
Are ready—and able—to hold the "home helm,"
 And give their men ease for the fray.

In the sylvan wood of Carrigaline
These twin stalwart souls seem to throb again,
As the phantom fleet passes Currabinny,
 That is frothed by the waves of Cork Harbour,
Gliding the ships to the angle of Camden,
Where the sea dashes too, on the rocks of Carlisle,
 And the gulls are whirling, and swirling, with
 strange prescient cries.

The full-bellied sails and creaking planks have gone over
 the edge of the sea,
Giving place to iron Colossus' and lurking sea-hid
 scorpions
That stab and sting at unwary ships, neutral and enemy
 alike,
Sweeping women and children, who reck not of war,
 Like seaweed into the sea.

Here in the woods to-day, by the fabled Pool of Drake,
I hear the deadly vibrations of England's last menace,
But the spirit that conquered Armada, in its crude
environment then,

Will conquer again Hell's devices, of air, and sea, and
land.

For spirit is greater than matter,
And right is stronger than wrong—

And survival is given to Truth.

Though the scorpions lurk and sting and the dragons at
random spit,

Envenomed by one fierce soul, that is spurred by
jealous hate,

Britain is God's and ours, and the "Beast" shall not
prevail!!!

Oh Ireland! my beautiful Ireland—

Blood-lashed and storm-tossed, since the days when
Drake hid here,

This is the last of menace to England—the last of
disunion between us,

Out of the storm shall our Souls arise,

New-bonded by mutual horror of utterless sin.

This is the dawn of freedom, clarioned from free
Britain's sea-ways,

This is the morning of life for the Races, groping so
long in chaos;

"Perverted sophistries vying for spurious grandeur!"

This is the Day when the dove shall arise

From the seething flood of hatred and strife;

Killing the hate and burning the dross in humanity,
Not even they whom we conquer, shall hate or be
hated

When victory—clean-won—is ours,
For Britain is God's and the Races', sea-girt and
immune from indignity,
And God shall speak to His nations
From the land He claims from the war.

SUNRISE

In the searchlight of courage undaunted,
From the brine of brave tears we repress,
Out of loftiest deeds humbly vaunted
Peace rises to cleanse and to bless.
The lessons we learned from sorrow
May be embryo joys that light
The dawn of a happy to-morrow—
After the long, dark night.

O'HAGAN, V.C.

Jim O'Hagan was waiting for Boches, and his pals were
waiting too,
But nobody would have guessed the fact, except for
the lurid hue
Which broke the sky at intervals, and tore the curtain
of night,
For the boys were talking of any old thing but what
they were out to fight.

Jim was telling a story—he was quite a dab at this,
And it generally fluctuated 'twixt the flowing bowl and
a kiss.
But his rollicking imitations and his merry Irish brogue
Took the boys away from the trenches and the
moment's ugly "Vogue."

I'll never forget the night (he said) old Hogan came
round in his car
To jaunt us along to the Club, from the pleasures of
M'Bride's bar,
When Billy Malone—you remember Malone—a devil
he was, by gad!
But a real good chap when you knew him—not a bit
to the bad.

Well, Billy Malone had an idea—he said the Club was
too slow,
And as Billy's ideas were scarce, we listened to this one,
you know,

But when we asked for a substitute, his inspired mood
gave out,
And nobody else got another one, until Hogan began
to shout,

“Shure now, yer honours, come on—do now, the
nag’ll get cold in her feet,
An’ it’s cold work, gentlemen, so it is, awaiting about
the street.”

Somebody gave old Hogan a drink, repairing an over-
sight,
And the old wretch gulped it down and said, “A start
for the weddin’ to-night.”

Billy Malone got inspired again. “A wedding!” he
cried, “Great Scot!

It’s what I’ve been wanting, but didn’t know—not
one but a whole bally lot.

Come on, you boys,” he bountifully said, “here,
Hogan, you lead the way,

I’ll bet you a tanner we’ll all be married before the
night’s a day.”

Billy Malone was very drunk, or he’d never go on like
that,

But the rest of us knew we could mind Malone, so we
crowded round old Pat;

And Pat, after some more whisky, told a mighty
inviting tale

Of pretty girls and a wedding dance, and a bride in a
wedding veil.

“ ’Tis fourteen miles, yer honours,” he said—“ but the
nag is good for the pace,
An’ it’s an iligant time I’ll promise, if yer don’t object
to the place :
Shure, ’tis me cousin’s darter that’s marryin’—a tidy
little colleen,
And the colleens wid her to-night are as bright as was
ever seen.”

Hogan felt thirsty again just then, and Billy filled up
his glass,
And said he’d go and shake hands with the horse—
Malone was always an ass ;
But he knew he was safe amongst us—there was Ward,
and O’Shane, and M’Gee,
And Terence M’Guire from Kildown Hall, and Dolly
Driscoll, and me.

Of course we couldn’t start fourteen miles, and let old
Hogan get cold,
Also we knew Billy hadn’t imbibed all he was able
to hold,
And after all—it was *his* idea—this break in monotony,
“ It takes some head to have ideas. What ! Don’t
you know ? ” said Archie M’Gee.

Garrick O’Shane was smoothing his hair, and Driscoll
was mixing a drink,
I was tying my tie, I remember, and Ward said he
wanted to think ;

Hogan was taking his seventh glass, and describing a
beautiful wake,
When Billy Malone came sadly back and said, "Boys,
the horse won't shake."

He seemed so cut up, we all had a drink. It's wonderful
how he revived,
And was giving impressions of Hogan's horse—when
Sally M'Bride arrived.
We always knew when Sally appeared that someone
had gone too far,
For Mrs M'Bride had a fine business eye, and seldom
left her own bar.

"Sure, Mr Malone, what's the matter now? it's an
awful noise you do make,"

Billy Malone put his arm round her neck, and said,
"Sally, the horse won't shake;

I was going to be married to-night, you see, and all the
others too,

But I've taken a dislike to Hogan's horse—so I think
I'll stay with you."

Mrs M'Bride was fifty and fat; she put Billy back in
a chair;

Up rose Hogan with kindling eyes, modulating his
accent with care;

"The nag's a bit out of temper-like, through standin'
about. Begorra!

But he's at yer sarvice, an' their honors' too, and 'ull
shake wid you all to-morrow."

“La!” said Sally, “ye’re all gone mad—but I’ve
always said the same :
Fast drinks and slow horses has been the ruin of many
a good man’s game :
Sure it’s bed you’re wanting, I plainly see—not a drop
more do you require,
’Tis a mother’s advice—Now, gentlemen, dear—Eh !
What’s that, Mr M’Guire ? ”

“Two magnums up on the car,” said Terence—
Terence usually paid—
He was such a good chap, with pots of cash, and a way
not to be gainsaid ;
Mrs M’Bride threw up her hands—“Och sure !—yer
honors—let be,
’Tis a mighty wonder you don’t ring the bell, and
order the River Lee.”

“Two magnums up on the car, if you please—never
mind the lemonade” ;
Mrs M’Bride with portly shrug, left further advice
unsaid ;
And Hogan followed her into the bar, where he
wheedled another drink—
Billy Malone, with a very wise look, was trying not to
blink.

I had tied my tie, I remember, and O’Shane had done
his hair,
And Dolly Driscoll was mixing a drink, while M’Gee
waltzed with a chair ;

Terence M'Guire put on his gloves, Ward sighed and struck a light ;
Said Billy Malone, after several attempts, "We'll all get married to-night."

Hogan was calling again outside, we could hear the jingling car,
And his voice expounding on dilatoriness—Sally came in from the bar :

"Mr M'Guire, the whisky is up (she looked both haughty and prim),
But if I was drivin' with Hogan to-night, I'd be after drivin' him."

We got on the car, I don't know how. We *all* helped Billy Malone,

But he seemed to resent our fostering care, and told us to leave him alone ;

Hogan got off with an awful jump, and I heard Ward utter a sigh,

Garrick O'Shane murmured softly, "damn," and M'Gee yelled out, "Hi ! Hi !"

Terence M'Guire leaned languidly back, gazing up at a star,

"Go easy, Pat," he gently drawled, "are the two bottles safe in the car ?"

"Two ! yer honor," Pat Hogan yelled, "shure it's more like six aboard

Inside yer skins, and in demijohns, and meself as drunk as a lord."

He led us a merry dance after that, while the stars
looked down and gaped,
For Billy Malone got another idea, and the awful
thing escaped ;
“We ought to sing,” he plaintively said—and somehow
we thought we could—
So we all commenced “My pretty Jane” except
Ward, who recited “Hood.”

It must have created a terrible row, for none of us
would give way,
And the nag bolted over the frozen snow, as if from
the judgment day ;
Ward couldn't sing, so he made up for that by de-
claiming more and more,
And Hogan stood up in the driver's seat, shouting,
“Go it ! ye divils ! encore ! !”

Now Terence M'Guire could really sing, and Ward
could really recite,
So, one by one, we all dropped out, and they put up
a vocal fight ;
The tenor, with most angelic face, the tragedian with
a frown—
And I'll swear, but I am not certain, that a lot of stars
fell down.

Billy Malone commenced to cry, and said it broke his
heart,
And Archie M'Gee made a fervent vow, that he and his
girl wouldn't part ;

Garrick O'Shane said *he'd* give a pound, to have a girl
there to kiss,
While song and recital together went on, something a
bit like this—

“ Oh Jane—Oh Jane, my pretty Jane—(One more
unfortunate)—Oh never look so shy,
(Hogan lashed up the horse and cried, Saints defend us,
I'm dhry !)

But meet me—meet me—(Had she a nearer one)—
(M'Gee shouted—Yes, tell us that ! ”)

But the nag stopped the duet by bolting—(“ God rest
her soul,” said Pat).

Nobody knows who won first place, because Hogan
had all his work

To keep the horse from turning about and galloping
back to Cork ;

But presently when he was quiet, and the car had come
to a stand,

Terence M'Guire, all wreathed in smiles, was shaking
Ward by the hand.

Old Hogan got out the whisky then, for he said we'd
all had a shock,

And Dolly Driscoll looked at his watch, and said,
“ Lord ! it's twelve o'clock ! ”

Billy Malone, who'd fallen asleep, exclaimed, “ Am
I married yet ? ”

And Archie M'Gee, with brimming glass, answered,
“ Really, dear boy, I forget.”

Well, I don't remember much after that. I think we
reached by chance
The home of Hogan's relations, and the whirl of the
wedding dance ;
Garrick O'Shane took a girl by the waist, and so did
Archie M'Gee,
And Ward, adopting Shakespeare, recited, "To be,
or not to be!!"

.
Jim O'Hagan turned merry eyes, full of fire and fun,
Around the laughing khaki lads—each one with hand
on gun—
As they cried, "Bravo! that's a corker, Jim—Well,
what happened next?"
Over their heads a great shell burst—and Jim forgot
his text.

.
Everyone knows that glorious tale, how the Irish
fought their way
Through seething hell and fiendish strength, as if at
Rugger play,
With Jim O'Hagan, bayonet fixed, yelling, "Glory
be—Come on!
Don't let the devils say a word till we've finished
every one."

And he carried the hour—O'Hagan, V.C.—tho' 'twas
only a little of Jim

That limped to Buckingham Palace to get honour
pinned on him ;
But his laughing eyes were clouded now, and his big
heart grim and sore,
For the lusty fights he had to forego, and the pals who
would laugh no more.

Dolly Driscoll and Garrick O'Shane are sleeping
together in France,
And Terence M'Guire, before he fell, led the Boches
a devilish dance ;
Billy Malone went up in a kite and pierced a Zeppelin
skin,
While Ward and M'Gee never knew they died, 'til
heaven invited them in.

.

I sometimes think we win our wars by forgetting we
are at war,
'Til the Lion, on scenting insult, gives a " psycho-
logical " roar ;
So perhaps O'Hagan's interlude is symbolic of the way
The British Army and Navy will always win the day.

LYRICS

BIRDS ON THE BILLOWS

The waves are flashing with silv'ry crest,

And the gulls whirl over the foam ;

My heart is singing in my breast

For I am sailing to love and home.

And birds and billows and heart of me

Are joyous as wind that blows at sea.

Oh, Birds on the billows—I long to be

As swift as your flight across the sea,

Cleaving a way as gay and free

To my love who is waiting at home for me.

The quivering ship is striding fast,

And the sky is sunny and blue ;

But waiting is longest at the last

To hearts that have been tried and true.

Yet the sky and birds and laughing sea

All promise the hopes that wake in me.

Oh, Birds on the billows—I long to be

As swift as your flight across the sea

Cleaving a way as gay and free,

To my love, who is waiting at home for me.

WE CANNOT FORGET

Dreaming to-night I hear your voice again,
Echo of sweetness from a bygone pain ;
Love wakes once more to bring my heart regret,
I have forgotten, dear, how to forget.

Heart of my heart, your face is all I see,
Vision arising from love's memory.
Roses may wither, but the buds will live
In memory's garden, if we both forgive.

Dreaming to-night, as lonely hours go by,
I know that you alone can light my sky ;
Why should a word of bitterness beset
The love that you and I cannot forget.

Heart of my heart, your voice is all I hear,
No other music is to me so dear ;
Come back again, and make the roses live,
The buds will blossom when we both forgive.

BREAKING HEART

O ! breaking heart, break soon,
I cannot bear you longer ;
From sunset until noon
This pain grows stronger.
O ! breaking heart, break soon.

When broken, will love's face
Fade from my misty tears ?
Or will the empty place
Ache through the empty years,
Mourning my wasted tears ?

O ! breaking heart, break now,
I cannot bear to wait
Until love's broken vow
Turneth my love to hate.
O ! breaking heart, break now.

WHILE WE ARE PARTED

I stand at my window, thinking,
When the birds in the garden wake ;
I kneel when the sun is sinking
In a glowing crimson lake.
I'm thinking and praying, beloved, for you ;
It is all a woman can do,
It is all a woman can do.

I dream when the night has hidden
The gulf between you and me,
Where love may hope unforbidden,
And pray for God's clemency.
I'm dreaming and praying, dear love of my heart,
God keep you while we are apart,
God keep you while we are apart.

ENOUGH (*Extract from a priceless letter*)

Enough that you have held me on your breast
And sooth'd my tears, yet bidding them to flow,
That you might kiss my warm, wet eyes—and so
Drying them with Love's touch—give sorrow rest.

Enough your voice recalled me tenderly
From anguish that seemed quenchless in that hour,
And yet which brought me life's most treasured flower,
Your Love, my love, which God had kept for me.

Enough you turned my clouds to summer blue
And brought me back to joy and hope again ;
Sweeping away lost faith and all its pain,
Dear Love, it is enough—Is it enough for you ?

CARNATIONS

They were blushing by my window
When I woke from dreams of you,
And I drew them softly in, so
I could kiss away the dew
From their petals—sweet and tender,
Like your lips in shy surrender
That my love has won.

Keep them, dear, while we are parted,
They are bathed in morning sun,
Gold, and dew so richly-hearted,
Like Love's radiance begun.
If I go—where flowers wither,
Your petal lips will call me hither
When my part is done.

MY LONELY GARDEN

Stars above the sleeping flowers,
Murmuring wind in ev'ry tree,
Silence of the midnight hours
Gives you back again to me.

In my lonely garden where we lived in dreams
Long ago, my love, so long ago it seems,
'Til the starlight brings you back again in dreams.

Dew upon the blushing roses,
Perfume from the velvet grass,
O'er my vision interposes
All your beauty as you pass
Thro' my lonely garden, Angel flower of mine ;
When the kiss of night-winds brings your love divine
Whisp'ring through my sorrow that you still are mine.

FINIS

Good-bye ! little book, you've come to an end,
And I find myself loth to part from you ;
When one is lonely, thought is a friend,
And you are my thoughts, and companion too.

Little blank sheets on which I have traced
Something, perhaps, my soul would express
Perchance for others who may be so placed—
Naught in this world is without redress.

Dreary hours may become quite sweet
With memories and shy surmise ;
A soothing sea, where two horizons meet,
With waves of thought like lullabies.



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